



Heart Health Essentials

There are so many variables to keeping your heart healthy. February is American Heart Month, so now is a great time to brush up on the essentials of heart health.

Factors That Affect Heart Health and What You Can Do About It:

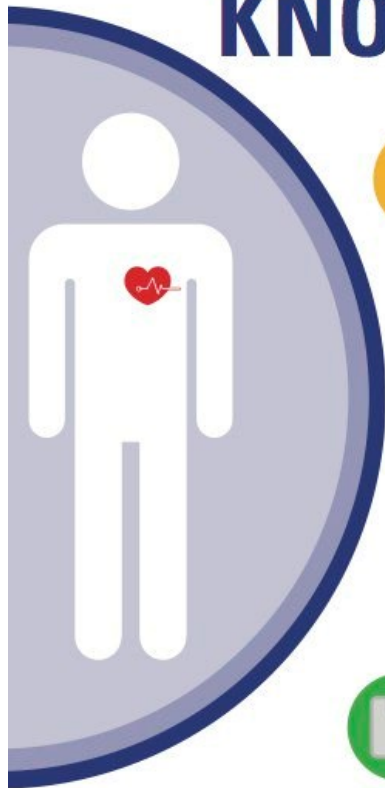
- ⇒ Genetics/Family History: this is not something you can control, but you and your doctor should be aware of it
- ⇒ Lifestyle: diet, exercise and sleep can have a big impact on the heart
- ⇒ Smoking: has many health issues associated with it, including increased risk of heart disease and stroke, so quitting is imperative



- ⇒ Diabetes: increases risk of developing heart disease, so controlling blood sugar through diet, exercise and medication is important
- ⇒ Weight: may be a contributing factor to developing heart disease, so eating a balanced diet and getting regular physical activity are keys to lowering risk
- ⇒ Blood Pressure and Cholesterol: maintaining normal blood pressure and cholesterol numbers through diet, exercise and medication can help keep your heart healthy

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS



Blood Sugar

This is the amount of sugar in your blood.

What should my number be? **Before eating: Less than 100**

Two hours after eating: Less than 140



Blood Pressure

This is the force of blood against your arteries when your heart beats (top number) and rests (bottom number).

What should my number be? **Less than 120/80**



Blood Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy substance produced by the liver. Too much can make it harder for blood to circulate.

What should my number be? **Total score less than 200**



Body Weight

Your ideal body weight depends on your gender, age, height and frame. BMI provides a good guideline.

What should my number be? **BMI 18.6 - 24.9**

Why do these numbers matter?

- ⇒ **Blood Sugar:** having consistently high blood sugar can stress the blood vessel walls and weaken them, so keeping blood sugar normal as often as possible can help slow the damage
- ⇒ **Blood Pressure:** the harder your heart has to pump to move blood, the more force is placed upon blood vessels. Over time, the vessels can lose their elasticity
- ⇒ **Cholesterol:** a little more complicated
 - **LDL** (“bad” cholesterol) is the waxy substance that forms plaques in the blood vessels, which can lead to heart attack or stroke. **This number should be under 100mg/dL** and can be lowered by increasing fiber and decreasing trans and saturated fats in the diet
 - **HDL** (“good” cholesterol) helps to clear away substances that may become plaques. **This number should be 40-59 mg/dL** and can be increased by regular physical activity and not smoking
 - **Triglycerides:** contribute to the hardening of arteries. **This number should be under 150mg/dL** and can be lowered by increasing physical activity

Three Sisters Soup

Makes 6 Servings

Recipe adapted from the American Heart Association

Ingredients:

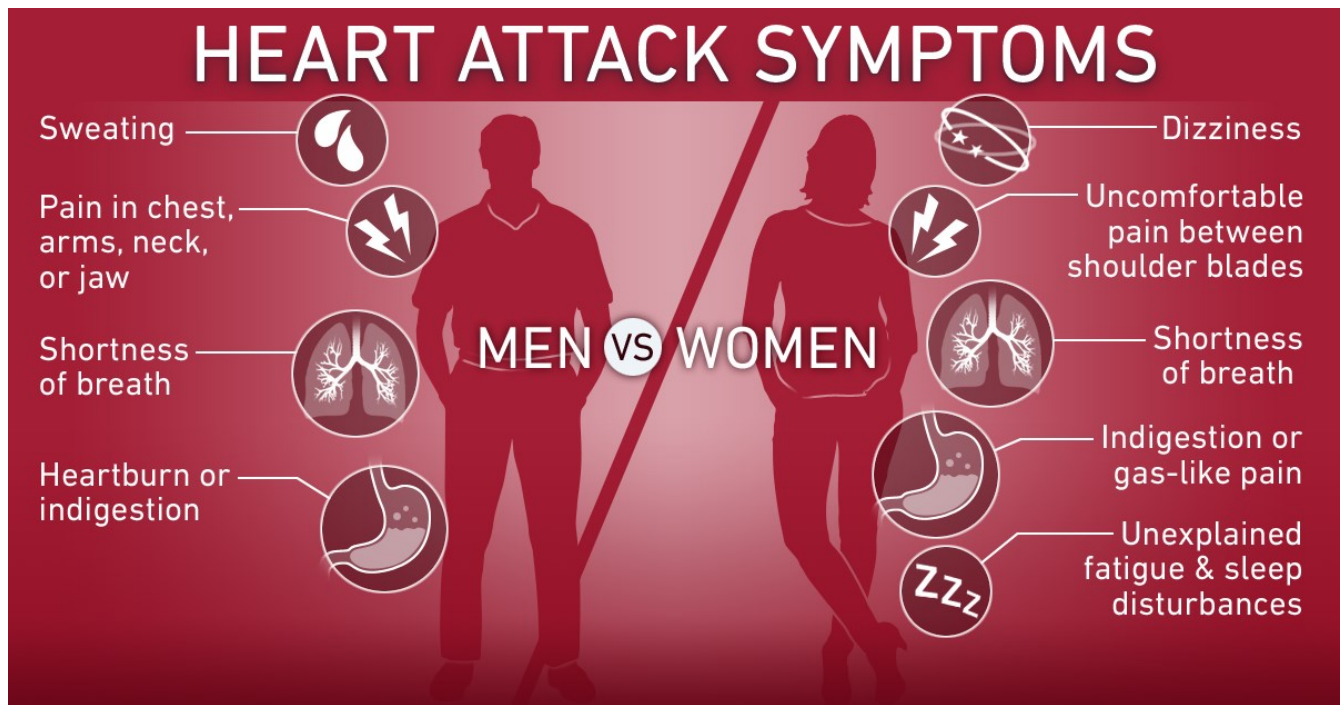
- 6 cups fat-free, low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 can (15.25 oz) no-salt-added whole kernel corn, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (15.25 oz) no-salt-added kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 rib celery, chopped
- 1 can (15 oz) solid-pack pumpkin (not pie filling)
- 5 fresh sage leaves OR 1/2 teaspoon dried sage
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder

Directions:

1. Pour the broth into a large stockpot. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
2. Stir in the corn, beans, onion and celery. Boil, still over medium-high heat, for 10 minutes.
3. Stir in the pumpkin, sage and curry. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 20 minutes.
4. Serve.

Per Serving: 145 calories, 9 grams protein, 10 grams fiber, \$1.80





Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/library/features/diabetes-and-heart.html#:~:text=Over%20time%2C%20high%20blood%20sugar,and%20can%20damage%20artery%20walls.>

<https://www.texasheart.org/heart-health/heart-information-center/topics/heart-disease-risk-factors/>

<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2019/02/01/8-things-that-can-affect-your-heart-and-what-to-do-about-them>

https://www.csdinsurancetrust.com/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=527423&type=d&pREC_ID=1808356

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/lifes-essential-8>

<https://www.templehealth.org/about/blog/heart-attack-symptoms-men-women-differences>

<https://recipes.heart.org/en/recipes/three-sisters-soup>

Consumer-centered access for long-term care information, referrals and assessments.

For information, call 518-382-8481, #9, ext. 304



NY Connects
Your Link to Long Term Services and Supports

Do you have questions or concerns about what to eat?

If you are participating in services offered by Schenectady County's Senior and Long Term Care services, you are eligible for a free consultation with Debbie Griswold, Registered Dietitian.

Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County at 518-372-1622, ext. 269 to contact or leave a message.

Check out our website for nutrition resources: <http://ccschenectady.org/nutrition-for-seniors>

Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services denies no person services or access to service based upon race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status and/or handicapping conditions. Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services is primarily funded with County tax dollars. Supplemental funding is through the New York State Office for the Aging under Title III-B/D, III-C-1, III-C-2, III-F of the Federal Older Americans Act, and New York State Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP), Community Services for the Elderly Act (CSE), Congregate Services Initiative (CSI), and the Wellness In Nutrition (WIN).

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